

guilty. We are very pleased with the leadership that ACORN is taking in addressing the needs of those who cannot speak for themselves.

They understand the need for transparency; they understand the need for audits; they understand the need for new leadership in many of their areas. And they are doing it. And I'm grateful for the fact that we have congressional oversight. But I'm not going to demonize an organization that helps those that cannot help themselves.

Very quickly, it is important for the President to be addressing the question of: What do we do in Afghanistan, counterinsurgency or counterterrorism? I believe we should surge up diplomacy, fight the terrorists, and gain the friendship of the Afghan people, and let the Afghans fight the fight alongside of us—and not send 40,000 troops into Afghanistan.

□ 1830

WHAT HAPPENED TO AUGUST?

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, before I return to my district this weekend, I thought I might ask the question on this floor once again, what happened to August? What happened to August? What happened to those town hall meetings? What happened to the pleas we heard from average, everyday Americans coming to town hall meetings by ones, twos and threes, coming with families, not coming bused, not coming organized, but just coming out of a concern about what we were about to do on this floor.

And yet I returned here after that period of time, and I have heard deafening silence from the White House about August. I have heard an absolute repudiation of August by the Democrats in the House and in the Senate.

No. We are talking about health care reform as if August did not exist, as if the American people did not exist and as if their concerns were not our concerns.

What happened to August? What happened to August?

HATE CRIMES BILL

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, today we had a conference report after just voting to send the matter to conference last night on the Defense authorization bill.

This authorizes what is being done in the military. On the backs of our soldiers is put the hate crimes bill. That is unbelievable. As if our soldiers don't have enough to do, we are going to put social bills like that on their shoulders and say, If you don't pass this to help

the soldiers, then we are going to say, gee, you're against the soldiers.

It's outrageous. They deserve better treatment. They deserve a straight-up vote on the Defense authorization without a hate crimes bill that will be, when coupled with 18 U.S.C. 2(a), the mechanism to muzzle ministers. I stood with dozens of African American ministers out here who knew they would be muzzled under this bill. It's not the right thing to do.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DAHLKEMPER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

DANCING WITH CZARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, we have 45 czars in America, and the dance card keeps growing. The President has the right to get advice from as many people as he wants to. And that's not new with our Presidents, and that is not a problem. Advisers are one thing, but policymakers are another thing altogether.

If someone is putting a policy in place, if someone is to govern and rule over the rest of us, they must be confirmed by the United States Senate. That's what the Constitution says and demands. After all, article II, section 2 states in part that the President may appoint ambassadors and other public ministers with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The American people have been asking a lot of questions about these czars. Who are these czars? What do they do? Is this a shadow government? What are the Cabinet secretaries doing? Why aren't they in charge of implementing policy instead of these czars? Do Cabinet secretaries report to our shadow government czars? Is that what happens? And why haven't we had transparency or confirmation hearings on these czars?

Now, Madam Speaker, here are some of the czars that we have. It's not all 45, but it's some of them. And let me list some of them for you. We have the Afghan-Pakistan czar. We have the AIDS czar and the auto recovery czar. We are getting a behavioral science czar. Now, what's that about, spanking of kids? No. It is actually about the study of human behavior and how the government can influence human conduct. Sounds a bit like the book "1984" to me.

We have a bailout czar. We have a border czar. Is the border czar supposed to secure the border or open up the border? Who knows? Nobody is telling us.

We have a climate change czar, a copyright czar, a counterterrorism

czar. We have a cyber security czar and a communications diversity czar. Let me repeat that one. A communications diversity czar. Ironically, this communications diversity czar is now barred from talking or communicating with the media. Now isn't that lovely? That's kind of odd in my opinion.

We have the disinformation czar. Now what does that person do? It sounds like he should be called the government propaganda czar to me.

We have two economic czars. We probably could use a few more of those. We have an education czar. We have an energy CIA. There's a food czar, the government performance czar, the Great Lakes czar, the Gitmo closure czar and the health care czar.

We have an info tech czar—well, we had an info tech czar, Madam Speaker. His last day in D.C. Government was March 4, but on March 12 the FBI raided his office and arrested two staffers. That position is still open for people who want to apply.

We have an intelligence czar. We have a Latin American czar, a Mideast peace czar and a Mideast policy czar. We have a pay czar and a regulatory czar. We have a religion, or God, czar; a safe school czar and a science czar. Now there's a beaut. Our science czar wrote a controversial book promoting population control.

We have a stimulus czar. And then, of course, there's the TARP czar, the technology czar, the trade czar and the urban affairs czar. We have the war czar, the water czar and, of course, there is a weapons czar.

Now, Madam Speaker, we know very little about those czars or what they do. We don't know who pays them or whether they paid their income tax. So Congress should defund these czars and no taxpayer money should go to pay for them or their salaries or their staffs.

After all, Madam Speaker, since we continue to dance with the czars, it would be nice to know who brought us to the dance.

And that's just the way it is.

COMMENDING OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 731 to commend our first responders for their tireless efforts to ensure our safety as they serve on our Nation's front lines. These brave men and women are often the first ones on the scene and the last ones to leave.

Firefighters in Lorain, Elyria, Barberton, Akron, Brunswick, Strongsville and throughout my district and our Nation deserve our deepest gratitude. In spite of all of the cuts that our firefighters are facing, they continue to put their lives on the line to save ours.

Far too many communities in the 13th District of Ohio have had to lay

off firefighters. In Lorain, 33 percent of the time, fire station No. 4 is closed. But even with these frequent closures, they still put their lives on the line. They risk their lives without hesitation. Lorain firefighters Shawn Lloyd and Dan Russell were injured as they pulled a 6-year-old girl from a fire. Four firefighters from Elyria saved the 56-year old life of Russell Bowles, who wasn't breathing and had no heartbeat. They used a defibrillator to bring him back to life and then rushed him to the hospital.

In August, an Elyria Township firefighter was injured by a gas tank explosion as he was responding to a house fire. In Akron, fire captains Albert Bragg and Charles Twigg arrived at a house fire and were told someone was still in the home. Without hesitation, they ran into the house. They found the man and they carried him to safety. And when a man in Brunswick was experiencing a type of cardiac arrest known as the "widow maker" because it almost always results in death, it was firefighter Russ Merhaut and his fellow team members who arrived on the scene and resuscitated him.

First responders not only keep us safe, they also actively support our communities. This year, Barberton police officers and firefighters helped raise about \$1,800 for the Youth in Action fund during the Police versus Fire Olympics. In Strongsville, the fire department plays an active role in Safety Town, which is a fire safety program that teaches children about fire safety and prevention.

We can sleep soundly at night knowing that these men and women are here to serve and protect us. But all too often, their service comes at a costly price. Each year, approximately 80,000 of our Nation's firefighters are injured. And last year, 103 firefighters were killed. Those who have made the ultimate sacrifice put their community and their neighbors above their own lives. And even though our departed firefighters are no longer with us, the lessons they taught us will last forever. Their noble and unrelenting allegiance to public service embodies the American spirit, and I cannot imagine better role models.

For these reasons, our Nation's firefighters and first responders deserve our continued praise and support. H. Res. 731 expresses our great appreciation for these great men and women. However, true support should come in the form of job stability. Protecting the jobs of our first responders is a top priority in ensuring the safety of all communities.

I was very pleased that language included in the supplemental appropriations bill this year expanded the use of the SAFER grants to allow communities to retain and rehire firefighters. Communities in my district are looking forward to applying for those grants that they so desperately need.

Given the economic hardships currently facing our country, these grants

are critically important to the wellbeing of our firefighters and communities. Far too many communities have had to lay off firefighters. And as we all know, these fire department closures cause response times to be longer. This can be risky for emergency callers as well as for our firefighters because a working fire has more time to grow and become more dangerous.

Lorain firefighters need these SAFER grants, and Fire Chief Tom Brown is ready and waiting to apply for them. Elyria firefighters need these SAFER grants, and Elyria Fire Chief Rich Benton is ready and waiting to apply for them. In Akron, 38 firefighters have been laid off. Our firefighters are people with mortgages and young children. Akron firefighters need these SAFER grants, and Fire Chief Larry Bunner is ready and waiting to apply for them.

Competition for the estimated \$630 million for the entire country will be intense. In 2008, 72 firefighters protected the city of Elyria, but today only 46 are tasked with the duty. And our union presidents like Dean Marks and Jon George are working hard to preserve jobs and the safety of their communities. The IAFF and the OAPF are working hard to protect the jobs of these brave men and women.

Our Nation's first responders can never be thanked enough for their efforts. Through this resolution, we recognize their brave work, and it does not go unnoticed. We salute the sacrifices and commitment to our State and local government officials for their efforts to keep our communities safe and deter acts of terrorism. Let's get those SAFER grants out.

□ 1845

CZARS NEED TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, the reason I rise tonight is to follow up on my good friend Mr. POE of Texas. He was talking about 45 czars being appointed by the President to run this government in large part. The thing that bothers me about that and what Mr. POE said is that these people do not have to go through the normal process of confirmation in the Senate.

The reason we have that process of advice and consent of the Senate is to make sure that the people that are being appointed are not only capable of doing the job, but they don't have anything in their closets that is going to cause disrepute, disrespect, or anything on the administration. But the administration continues to appoint these people as czars in large part, I believe, because he doesn't want the American people to know their backgrounds.

We've had people that have been appointed who are admitted Communists, people who have been appointed who have been involved in supporting nefarious activities and deviant kinds of activities, and it just seems to me that the American people need to know those things. But unfortunately, the administration continues to appoint these czars because they know they do not have to go through the confirmation process. I think that's just wrong.

So, if I were talking to the President, I think if the American people were talking to the President tonight, as would Mr. POE, my good friend from Texas, would like to say, Hey, let's have these people unveiled. Let's find out what they're all about before they take on positions of responsibility, positions that spend taxpayers' money and make decisions on how this government is run. We need to know what kind of people they are. We need to know their backgrounds.

So I would just like to say, if I were talking to the President on behalf of the American people, Let's go through the regular process, Mr. President, just like you do with Cabinet appointees. Make sure that there is a background check done on them by the FBI so we know what they're about. Let's make sure they go through the confirmation process, through the Senate, through the committee system and are voted upon by the United States Senate so that they are confirmed. And if we do that, we'll know that they're competent people, honorable people who will do the job for the American people and not people that we're going to be embarrassed by later on.

IN AFGHANISTAN, "EIGHT IS ENOUGH" TO PROVE THERE'S NO MILITARY SOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today is the eighth anniversary of American involvement in Afghanistan. America will soon be at war in Afghanistan longer than we were in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War combined.

For 8 long years we've been trying to find a military solution in Afghanistan, but we have not succeeded. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent, and over 850 of our brave troops have died, but the insurgency continues to grow. Now President Obama is being urged to double down on the military option. Some people believe that all we need to do is send in 40,000 more troops, and then we can roll out the "mission accomplished" sign. But the last 8 years of fighting, Madam Speaker, have proven beyond doubt that there is no military solution to Afghanistan, and escalating the war now will only make things worse, not better.

A study done by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace found